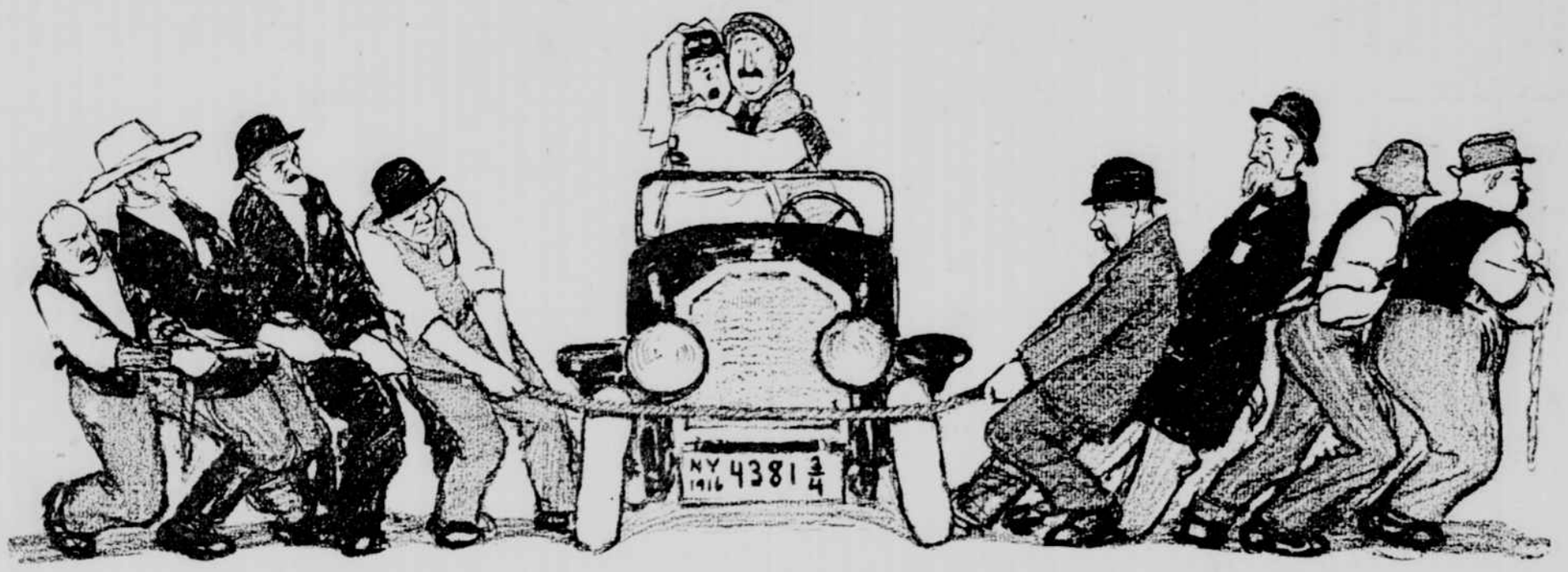

QUARANTINES FOR REVENUE ONLY

By DEEMS TAYLOR

THE paralysis epidemic is ebbing, and certain estimable citizens of Anyville are just a bit—well, not exactly disappointed, perhaps. Faintly regretful, let us say. It isn't that the people of Anyville are particularly barbarous. They are probably no more eager to see children sicken and die than you are. Just the same, if there could be some way of prolonging certain results of the epidemic without continuing the epidemic itself they wouldn't be sorry. For through infantile paralysis came prosperity to some in Anyville, at least, and they hate to see it wane.

YOU CAN FIND ANYVILLE ON THE MAP. SHUT YOUR EYES AND JAB.

Anyville is not a real place—that is, not any one particular place. It is in New York, or New Jersey, or Connecticut, or Northern Pennsylvania. It is any one of the towns and small cities that outlie New York within a radius of fifty miles or so. But, call it what you like and locate it where you please, its habits are about the same everywhere.

When the infantile paralysis scare overtook us and New Yorkers began hurrying their children off to the country to get them out of harm's way, Anyville had a small panic of its own. Its citizens were not quite sure just what *poliomyelitis* was, nor whether it was infectious or merely contagious. But they did know that a lot of New York children had it, and they didn't intend to have their own exposed to it. So Anyville began barring New York children from its midst.

Now, you can't blame Anyville for this embargo. A quarantine is a legitimate and effectual means of limiting an epidemic. Still, one might wish that Anyville had gone about the matter a little differently.

Anyville's Board of Health is a rather rudimentary organization, having a peace strength of one, that one being old Dr. Blevin, who graduated from medical school in 1869 and classes germs with Santa Claus and the other myths. So when Anyville declared a quarantine Health Officer Blevin needed help to enforce it and proceeded to appoint deputies—or, if he didn't, the local administration did it for him.

And so prosperity has descended upon the voters of Anyville. Sturdy citizens who had been devoting years of research work to studying the problem of how to live without performing manual labor suddenly awoke to find that the problem had solved itself overnight. No longer is the war settled every evening over in Ferris's drug store; no longer do disinterested patriots steer the Administration through the Mexican crisis on the veranda of the American House. The leisure class has gone to work.

It is not very hard work, of course. Being deputy health officer in Anyville is much like any other political job, the chief requirement being a total innocence of any special knowledge and a willingness to receive $2 a day.

The surprising thing is the number of jobs that can be invented at a pinch. Of course, the sheriff jumped into the breach, together with his squad of trained automobile stoppers, who in normal times divide their time between intercepting passing automobiles and assuring the Sheriff that the machines were going at a speed of eighty-seven miles an hour. But there must also be a second line brigade of rope holders, to stretch barriers across the roads in order to catch drivers who managed to elude the stoppers. Then there was a sort of landsturm to be created, comprising question-askers, blank-fillers-in, back-seat-lookers-under and age calculators. These last are very important and highly efficient. After a few days' practice they could look at any teething infant and decide almost instantly whether or not it was under sixteen years of age.

And so for weeks these brave men have been at work protecting Anyville and drawing their salaries. They have patrolled the roads about Anyville and the Anyville station. They have stopped travellers, whether by auto or by rail, and have cross-examined them industriously. The questions have not always been very intelligent; in fact, they have generally been rather foolish. But that was not the point, after all. It's the asking that is important, not the questions.

DUCKING FOR CHILDREN IS A GAME THAT IS MUCH LIKE DUCKING FOR APPLES.

If the travellers have come in by automobiles and have had no children visible the special squad of back-seat-lookers-under have searched diligently to make sure that there are none concealed about the machine. It sounds like a rather feeble attempt at humor to say that frequently the searchers *have* looked under the back seats of automobiles and have even opened tool boxes and unrolled rugs in order to be certain that there were no children being smuggled through, but it is the truth. Anyville's deputies have made up in thoroughness what they lacked in common sense.

Not that the quarantine has been invariably effectual. The Sheriff himself patrolled the station platform and met every train that arrived, but he forgot to have any one patrol the other side of the trains, so that of late he has been assailed by a horrid fear that some nefarious parents may have slipped off the train on the far side with their offspring and so eluded him.

At Anyville, Long Island, the little daughter of the town postman was attacked by infantile paralysis. So old Doctor Blevin promptly quarantined every one in the house except the postman. He had to allow the postman to go back and forth, he explained, because he could not legally interfere with the mails. Uncle Sam's mails are sacred; they must be delivered to the community regardless of the cost to the community. You can no more quarantine a postman than you can force a mail truck to slow down to thirty miles an hour in a crowded street.

During the first fortnight of its panic Anyville barred *all* children without regard to where they came from. But that made bad feeling. Protests began to come in from Anyville, N. J., and Anyville ten miles up the line. So finally the embargo was limited to New York children alone. Not that Anyville minded very much. One suspects that the sometimes excessive zeal of Doctor Blevin and the Sheriff is not altogether unconnected with a certain satisfaction at being in a position to show the city folks a thing or two.

All in all, an exhilarating period. Dr. Blevin was heard to say jocosely the other night: "Tell you what, boys, I almost hope this scare keeps up a while longer. There's a pretty good profit in health certificates at $2 per." But you musn't take the doctor too seriously. He does his work conscientiously enough.

Not every one is happy, though. The Anyville business men are seriously annoyed, in fact. They say that this scare—"hysteria" is the exact term they use, I believe—is bad for business. Their automobile trade has fallen off scandalously. If they had their way there would be no quarantine at all.

In some instances they have almost had their way. At Anyville-on-the-Sound, for example, there is a public bathing beach that enjoys great popularity among New Yorkers. When the local Health Department announced a quarantine against New York children there was great indignation in trade circles. Finally the Anyville Board of Trade submitted a plan which, they thought, would settle things to every one's satisfaction. If there must be a quarantine, they said, let it be laid upon the inhabitants of Anyville. The transients who came to the beach hired bathing suits and bath houses, beside spending considerable sums of money at Anyville's stores and garages. The local folks, on the other hand, owned their own bathing suits and put them on at home. By putting the Board of Trade's scheme into effect, the citizens of Anyville would be kept out of danger, while the golden stream that flowed from the transients would flow on uninterrupted. To Dr. Blevin's credit be it said that he did not find the Board of Trade plan feasible.

THAT FEELING OF PANIC IS NOT PRODUCED BY INFANTILE AILMENTS ALONE.

No, Anyville has not shone. But do not judge her too harshly. Perhaps it is not quite fair to single her out for special obloquy. Anyville, confronted with the possibility of an infantile paralysis epidemic of her own, grew panic-stricken, and took precautions that were absurdly out of proportion to the danger that confronted her. Still, panics are not altogether unprecedented in the world. Even now a certain great republic, confronted with the spectacle of a world war, is going through a very fair little panic of its own, organizing navy leagues and national defence societies and toying with the idea of conscription.

Anyville's quarantine officials were neither experienced nor efficient. It is strongly suspected that some of the citizens who obtained jobs were more interested in their pay than in their work. It is thought that some positions were even given out to pay off political debts. Er—do you suppose that by any chance Anyville had heard of the New York Board of Education, or of certain gentlemen who used to draw pay for sitting in condemnation proceedings, or of some of the "deserving Democrats" who hold office in our national government?

THERE IS, AS YOU MAY HAVE NOTED, A CERTAIN FAMILY RESEMBLANCE AMONG BOARDS OF TRADE.

Some of the acts of the Anyville quarantine officials were arbitrary and tyrannical. Yes, but so was the conduct of our War Department when it mobilized our militia for active service in a threatened Mexican war and then decided to keep the militiamen drilling in Mexico until Christmas.

The Board of Trade of Anyville-on-the-Sound showed symptoms of being near-sighted and greedy when it preferred to subject Anyville's citizens to discomfort and inconvenience rather than lose a little hoped-for revenue. Don't forget, though, that for years the Boston Chamber of Commerce opposed the elevated railroad between North Station and South Station, on the ground that people would not buy at the stores unless they were forced to walk past them; that it is now objecting to the proposed Boston subway extension on the same grounds. For that matter, don't forget that boards of trade of eighty years ago objected to the steam locomotive because it would ruin the market for oats.

Some of Anyville's citizens are not above making money out of a calamity. But neither are our armor plate manufacturers and munitions makers. Is every member of the Navy League a self-sacrificing idealist? Look over the membership list and see what you think.

Anyville is not wholly admirable. She has shortcomings—and many of them. But she has something else, too. Anyville has company.

Certain Thoughts About My Tailor

By GEORGE S. KAUFMAN.

COWARDICE of the moral variety is one of the forms of human weakness that I have long regarded with disdain. I have rather prided myself upon my ability to go my way untrammelled, to ignore with abandon the conventions of society and the opinions of its inhabitants. On several occasions, it is true, this independence of thought and action has resolved itself into a slavery more exacting than a simple adherence to custom, for there have been times when I have put myself to great inconvenience in order to preserve my independence. But doubtless every individualist has found himself in that position.

Despite its advantages, however, I repeat that moral cowardice has no charms for me. I am a man who wants his Rights. I feel no qualms at carrying a pair of guaranteed-six-months hosiery back to the haberdasher at the end of the twenty-third week and requesting a new pair. I have been known to refuse an emolument to a waiter who had been visibly lax (invisibly, rather) in his attentions. I do not hesitate to demand a transfer when I leave a trolley car in case I have neglected to ask for it earlier. And yet—well, there is no use in my attempting to conceal it. For there is a grinning, jangling skeleton in my moral closet. I am afraid of my tailor!

I am afraid of my tailor because he is quite obviously far above me in the social scale. He is not aware of this difference in our ranks, and I take good care that he does not discover it. He thinks that I am something quite important in a business way—I can tell by the way he talks to me. He tells me to come in for a fitting on Thursday morning at 10 o'clock on my way down to the office, and he chats about the income tax occasionally, and he is not above mentioning May wheat. I would not have him know the truth for the world. I would feel terrifically ashamed, for example, if he knew that I purchase only two suits in a twelve-month. I conceal that from him very artfully. All of my wardrobe, as a matter of fact, is acquired at his establishment, but I do not let him know that. I complain that he does not offer so varied a selection as do some of the other shops. I convey the impression that I purchase numerous suits elsewhere. Sometimes I look down at the one I am wearing and remark, carelessly, "Let's see; this is one of yours, isn't it? Oh, yes."

Of course, the suit that I am wearing is frequently rather frayed here and there, but I am facile at inventing explanations. I have been frightfully busy, or I would have been in before this. And I hadn't really noticed how far gone it was—I shall have to give it to the Salvation Army, or somebody. Really, I must pay a little more attention to my clothes. I was thinking of buying two suits this time. . . . No, I'd better not. I'll come in again in a month.

I am rather particular about the selection of the cloth. It must be just so. You know what I mean—conservative, and yet not just the common, everyday thing. I want something distinctive, but it must have dignity. I insist upon the dignity—I think that is one of the reasons why my tailor holds me in such high esteem. And another thing. It must be quiet—the pattern, I mean. I always contrive to use the word quiet at least twice while selecting a fabric. I must have something, you know, that is in keeping with the tone of my daily life.

When it comes to the details of the tailoring I am no less firm. I want style, of course, but nothing extreme. Not cut in too much at the waist, and none of the giddy little quirks that are affected by our brainless youths. I feel that I must talk in that way to retain my tailor's respect—the truth is that I do not feel that way at all. All my life I have longed for an ultra-fashionable garment, cut along extreme lines and embellished with all the latest gewgaws of the tailoring trade. And then I have wanted to attire myself in it and walk down Fifth Avenue, with a cane in my hand, and pretend to be ignorant of the many admiring glances. That is my ambition—but I would not dream of confiding it to my tailor. Good heavens! what would he think of me!

Some day, I know, my tailor will discover me for the fraud that I am. The unmasking will take place on one of the days when I drop in for a fitting. My tailor calls it dropping in; with me it is far from so casual a performance. I spend the few hours previous to the ordeal in a fever of anxiety lest I shall be unable to pass it off with the casualness with which my tailor views it. On my way to the fitting I invariably make a number of alarming discoveries. My cuffs are dirty. It would not matter if I could keep my coat on; in that event I could contrive to conceal the cuffs in my sleeves. But I am to have a fitting. I must take off my coat—and my vest. I suddenly recall that there is one of those little holes in my shirt, just below the neckband, and there is no way of spreading the tie around to conceal it. Speaking of my tie, my tailor is almost certain to observe that I hold it down with a pin instead of the gold-with-diamond tie clasp to which he is undoubtedly accustomed. I will be ashamed to go near the place again.

Even assuming that I am aided by a miracle, and that my tailor is called to the telephone at a critical moment, I must not forget that I shall also have to try on the trousers. My tailor will usher me into one of the little booths, and jangle the curtain across, but there is no guarantee that he will not pop in on me before I am ready. Sometimes they do that. In that case he is almost certain to notice that my socks are not silk, and that I wear blue garters—twenty-five cent ones. He is a gentleman, of course, and he would endeavor to hide his knowledge, but he would know, and I would know that he knew. Our relations could never be the same again.

Yes, I am afraid of my tailor. Up to date I have succeeded in fooling him, but some day the whole carefully reared structure will come crashing down about my ears—I believe that is the expression. Some day, alas, he will know that if I had not shamelessly recorded my feelings in this manner I would not be able to make my semi-annual call upon him.

The Stronger Soul—a War Story of Three

Continued from Page Two.

"Well, so be it!" he whispered feebly. Then he fell asleep.

From now on the patient's condition improved rapidly. The surgeon soon began to talk of the possibility of sending him home. Vera went about in a dream, doing her work mechanically just as she had done it before. Her husband lay half propped in the bed and his look followed her every step and movement. She reddened under his gaze, but she knew no way of escaping it, since there was only this one room into which their life was cramped. Once he said, in a tone of astonishment:

"Vera, you have changed."

"I have also lived through much," she answered calmly.

"Vera, was your hair always so long and soft? Come here, let me see whether it is not too heavy for you!"

She trembled and let the golden waves slip from her hands. Yet she walked obediently to his bedside and his pale hands entangled themselves in the fine golden web.

"You have forgotten," she said softly.

He grew red, though she did not notice it, and that rejoiced him.

"Vera, what are those books, lying there? What are you reading?"

"A volume of Treitschke, 'Wilhelm Meister' and the New Testament."

"Since when have you taken to such serious reading?"

"Since I was left in loneliness and yet needed a friend as much as I needed bread. I found that friend in books."

That sounded harsh and indifferent. So he asked nothing more. But other days brought other questions, though both felt a great shyness about facing the explanation which must some time come. He felt from her proud, reserved manner that his letter had reached her—that she had come and stayed, nevertheless; and had unselfishly accepted all the burden of care, responsibility and hard work. The doctor could never say enough to him in praise of what she had done. All this filled him with an unbounded respect for the young wife whom he had formerly treated as a child—whom he had tolerated as an utterly insignificant factor in his life.

He observed how his comrades worshipped her—the wife who had fearlessly ventured into the tumult of war because of her great love for him, as they thought. He saw her jest with them; heard her clear, cool laugh, which in spite of all its merriment never weakened the barrier of reserve that in the presence of all these men her proud self-control always drew around her.

His mind was in a ferment of conflicting emotions. His eyes never left her as she came and went. His pulse quickened, when she bent over him; he trembled under her touch when she lifted or propped up his still feeble body.

A time came when he could bear the strain of silence no longer. It was a soft, mild March day, and all the windows were thrown wide open. An orderly came in and handed her a letter. She took it without a word and brought it to his bedside.

He started violently. It was the Other Woman's handwriting.

She glanced at his face, half guilt-stricken, half defiant—so much like the face of her boy at home. The thought of her child, their child, restored her quiet self-control, which for a moment she felt that she was about to lose.

"Read it," she said calmly. "I wrote her that you were getting better."

"Vera, did you do that?" he cried.

She nodded.

"In the early days many dispatches and letters came. She was worried by your silence. Then I telegraphed her: 'Wait: I am with him. Vera von Manzdorff.'"

He was speechless. He merely stared at her.

"It is not her fault that she loves you. I am sorry for her. She has no rights before the world. That she has made the mistake of becoming the mistress of a married man is a misfortune for her. But your responsibility is greater than hers. She wants to marry you, it seems, as soon as we are divorced. That I will release you"——

"Vera, I implore you! Stop! Be merciful!"

The cold sweat stood on his brow. The Other Woman! What did the Other Woman matter?

He loved the proud, reserved creature before him with passionate ardor. She might despise him. Yet she had done everything for him—and sacrificed everything. She must still care something for him.

"Vera!"

He grasped her hand and drew her down toward him.

"Vera, tell me honestly: Why did you do all this for me, if you no longer love me?"

Silently she brought him the New Testament, opened it and said: "Read!"

And he read: "Truth, Lord; but the dogs eat the crumbs"——

"See, such was my love for you—thankful for every crumb which you threw me. You have sent me to a hard school. I know now that love must be proud, even when it serves."

Then he threw himself forward and hid his dark head in her breast for shame. He would gladly have given his heart's blood to wash out the record of the past. Slowly his arms stole about her body. She suffered it in shy constraint.

Half unconsciously, with a touch of that maternal feeling which every true woman possesses, which offers consolation even when it is itself a sufferer, her hand lightly stroked his hair. That modest caress banished the remnant of obstinacy in the man's heart. Like a torrent burst out of him all that had hitherto created distrust and antagonism between them. And she replied—still gently hesitating as to whether she ought to give him her confidence again.

Softly lengthened the shadows of this first spring day. On the bare branches of a birch tree outside the open window a black thrush sat and practised her love song.